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ABSTRACT

This project designed a family literacy program for parents with mild learning disabilities, including mental retardation. The program, which was conducted annually for 3 years, was intended to upgrade the reading skills of the parent, and at the same time, upgrade the parents' knowledge of children's literature. The class was designed for a group of no more than 15 parents who had children under the age of 10. The targeted group of parents were individuals whose limited reading skills prevented them from reading to their children. These persons were recruited from an adult literacy program, from parents of children in a learning center program, and from the community. In the third year of the program, 20 class meetings were held from December 1994 to April 1995. Each class session revolved around a specific subject or activity. Parents were exposed to numerous children's books and they also learned many educational and entertaining activities to do with their children. The parents seemed to enjoy the program and they appreciated the materials they received. All involved showed some degree of progress. Although attendance was sporadic at times, it was much improved over the previous 2 school years. (This report includes sample lesson plans that can be useful to literacy providers who are working with parents having lower reading levels.) (Author/KC)

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ED 395 103

CONTINUING THE EXPLORATION OF BOOKS:

A FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM FOR CHALLENGED ADULTS

A Final Report Containing:

Project Abstract
Introduction
Assessment Information
Instructional Strategies
Objectives
Materials/Resources

#98-5012 F.Y. 1994-1995
$3,082.00 Federal Funding

Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Center
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ABSTRACT PAGE

Title:
Continuing the Exploration of Books: A Family Literacy Program for Challenged Adults

Project No.: 98-5012 Funding: $ 3,082

Project Director: Dr. Maureen Barber - Carey Phone No.: (814) 453-7661

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Agency Address 136 East Avenue, Erie, PA 16507

Purpose:

The purpose of this Family Literacy Project was to introduce developmentally challenged parents to a wide variety of children's literature that they would be able to share with their children. We believed that if parents practiced reading these books both in class, and then again at home with their children, they would upgrade their oral reading skills. Additional discussion of the stories would help them achieve a higher level of comprehension. In order to expand upon the original goals of the program, we included some activities that we believed were worthwhile even though they did not center around a book. Game Day, Calendars, and Newspapers were three of these.

Procedures:

Each week the parent participants were introduced to one topic or theme through a children's book. The students practiced reading the books in class and then took them home to share with their children. Other class sessions included learning how to play a game in order to take it home and play with one's children, creating a family tree, and learning how to use the newspaper with children.

Summary of Findings:

The students seemed to enjoy the various topics and activities which were addressed this year. They were very enthusiastic and appreciative of the materials which they received. All involved students showed some degree of progress.

Comments: (Conclusions, Findings, Barriers, if any):

Overall, the program ran smoothly. Attendance, though sporadic at times, was much improved over the two previous school years.

Products: (if applicable):

A Final Report describes each class session along with suggested activities and observations by both the teacher and the parent students.

Descriptors (To be completed only by Bureau staff):

CONTINUING THE EXPLORATION OF BOOKS:

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Acknowledgments

This project would not have been possible without the contributions made by the administration and staff of the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Center, Inc. including:

Dr. Gertrude A. Barber, President/Chief Executive Officer

Dr. Maureen Barber-Carey, Administrator

Mr. Robert Will, Deputy Administrator

Mrs. Joy Zamierowski, Literacy/A.B.E. Coordinator

Mrs. Christine Cavarretta, Reading Instructor

Mrs. Rebekah Danielson, Assistant Instructor

Mrs. Julie Karsznia, Casework Coordinator (Former Adult Education Coordinator)

Special thanks to:

The Ashtabula County A.B.E. Program and the Ohio Department of Education for some of the ideas contained herein

The Erie County Library System

All of the parents who participated in this program

ALS_RPT (7/95)

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Abstract

Continuing the Exploration of Books:

A Family Literacy Program for Challenged Adults

An Act 353 Special Demonstration Grant F.Y. 1994-1995

Federal Funding: $3,082.00 #98-5012

This project designed a Family Literacy Program for parents with mild learning challenges including mental retardation. The original concept of a Family Literacy Program was developed during the 1992-1993 school year. The program was continued during the 1993-1994 and the 1994-1995 school years. Each year new objectives, activities, and materials were utilized. The underlying goal of the program, however, remained the same: to upgrade the reading skills of the parent, and at the same time, upgrade the parent's knowledge of children's literature.

The program was designated specifically for parents of children, aged 10 and under. The targeted group of parents were individuals whose limited reading skills prevented them from reading to their children. It was our hope that the children would indirectly benefit from their parent's participation in the program.

The Family Literacy class was designed for a group of no more than 15 parents. These persons were recruited from the Adult Literacy Program, from parents of children in the Learning Center Program, and from the community. Twenty class meetings were held from December of 1994 to April of 1995. Each class session revolved around a specific subject or activity. Parents were exposed to numerous children's books throughout the program, and they also learned many educational and fun activities to complete with their children.

The development of a project journal including sample lesson plans, activities, and materials was the final phase of this project. We believe that the journal, featured in this final report, will be useful to literacy providers who are working with parents having lower reading levels.

Introduction

This project was established to meet the very low literacy skills of parents associated with our agency. It was the belief of caseworkers, therapists, and other staff members that the illiteracy among some of the parents associated with our agency prevented them from being involved in their children's lives to any great extent. We believed that children's books could be the catalyst for the discussion of numerous topics. Additionally, parents would be upgrading their reading skills with more frequent time spent reading. Our goal was to bring books into the lives of involved families, and at the same time, encourage parents and children to spend more quality time together.

Twenty class periods were set forth for instruction. The program began in mid November and concluded in mid April, taking standard breaks for holidays. Four additional sessions were used to develop the program, purchase the materials, and document lesson plans and observations. This project was staffed by the literacy coordinator, employed two hours weekly; the instructor, employed three hours weekly; and the paraprofessional, employed three hours weekly.

The class was designed for a group of no more than 15 individuals. Most often a group of four or five parents attended class regularly. This number, although lower than the ideal number, proved to be a comfortable group with which to work. The limited reading skills of involved parents combined with the fact that so much of the work was individualized, made working with larger groups almost impossible.

This final report was prepared for and should be of interest to literacy providers working with parents having various reading levels. On a local level, it will be sent to other literacy providers in Erie County. It will also be distributed to other programs at the Dr. Gertrude A. Barber Center, Inc. Main Campus, as well as its satellite programs in Corry and Girard, Pennsylvania.

On the state level this final report will be submitted to the:

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Adult Basic and Literacy Education Programs
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Assessment

Not all students were assessed in each of the three areas below. Due to irregular attendance, coupled with the fact that the class ran for only a total of 20 sessions, some students were assessed in only one or two areas. Test scores are given only when entrance and exit scores are available.

Curriculum Based Assessment (Words found in children's books which were unknown at the first reading but later became known to the reader)

Student A	3/21
Student B	11/20
Student C	14/26
Student D	28/34
Student E	15/23

Woodcock Test of Reading Mastery - Passage Comprehension

Student A	11/29/94	2.3
	4/4/95	2.5
Student B	11/8/94	3.0
	5/3/95	3.8
Student C	11/16/94	1.5
	4/3/95	1.8

Culture Free Self-Esteem Inventories

Table F, Form AD.
Classification of Scores
Adults

	Score	Classification
	30+	Very high
	27-29	High
	20-26	Intermediate
	14-19	Low
	13-	Very low
Student A	11/29/94	15/32 (Low)
	4/4/95	16/32 (Low)
Student B	11/29/94	14/32 (Low)
	4/4/95	11/32 (Very Low)
Student C	11/29/94	19/32 (Low)
	4/4/95	20/32 (Intermediate)
Student D	11/29/94	14/32 (Low)
	4/4/95	20/32 (Intermediate)
Student E	11/29/94	12/32 (Very Low)
	4/4/95	13/32 (Very Low)
Student F	11/29/94	17/32 (Low)
	4/4/95	28/32 (High)

Family Literacy Journal

The following is a complete Family Literacy Journal which includes:

A. PROJECT OBJECTIVES
B. SAMPLE LESSON PLANS
   Parent Observations
   Teacher Observations
   Professional Resources

A. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The 1994-1995 Family Literacy Program was, in many ways, a continuation of the original program established during the 1992-1993 school year. The main goal has always been to unite parents and children through books. Although the primary goals have remained the same each program year, the secondary objectives have been changed. We wanted to dream up a multitude of ways to introduce interesting topics to developmentally challenged parents through children's books. Throughout the three year course of this program, there have been many topics and numerous accompanying books and activities. We believe that this final report will be useful to other adult education providers working with parents having limited reading and/or parenting skills.

The following objectives were proposed for the 1994-1995 program:

a. To increase the sight word vocabulary of parent participants by developing individual word banks for each student. At the end of the program year, each student will have learned new words which can easily be documented.

   All of the individuals who were assessed in this area showed improvement. The involved individuals mastered anywhere from 3 to 28 new words. Each person had a word list made up of words he/she had encountered in the children's books when reading. The parents practiced these words during class sessions when time permitted.

b. To upgrade the individual's comprehension of printed material as shown through assessment in the passage comprehension section of the Woodcock Test of Reading Mastery.

   Of those individuals who persisted with the program and received entry and exit testing 100% showed improvement.

c. To upgrade the self-esteem level of participants as measured on a self-esteem chart which has been designed in order to make increased self-esteem a measurable objective.

   The Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventories was used to measure increased self-esteem among adult participants. Five of the six individuals who were tested at the start, and then again at the end of the program, showed some type of increased self-esteem.

d. To upgrade the self-esteem level of the participant's children as measured through a chart which will be designed for measuring self-esteem in children.

   The children were not formally assessed for self-esteem levels due to the limited amount of staff members and the brevity of the program.

e. To increase the frequency of reading between parent and child as measured on a newly designed reading chart that both parents and children can easily document.

The program instructor designed reading charts to accompany different themes and holidays. Some of these charts were returned after being completed, while others were not. Even though most of the parents did not record reading frequency, they all insisted that during an average week, they were reading to, or with, their children.

f. To upgrade the individuals overall basic reading skills through weekly activities including reading, writing, and spelling, which will be compiled in a student portfolio and checked regularly by the program instructor.

Portfolios were not established for parents although various activities were performed over the course of the program.

g. The Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventories will be used to measure stronger self-esteem levels among program participants.

Of the six persons who received both an entrance and an exit test, five showed some type of improvement.

Concomitant results of the program were expected to be these:

1. Stronger, more meaningful relationships between parents and children.
2. Stronger oral reading skills, especially in the areas of fluency, pronunciation, and expression.
3. Increased knowledge of the literacy themes found in children's literature, and an increase in their application.
4. Increased understanding of the benefits associated with utilization of the library.
5. Improved parenting skills as a result of class discussion.
6. Increased vocabulary, communication, reading, and readiness skills, and overall well-being of children through additional exposure to books.
7. A better understanding of the joys of reading.

Although these results are not easily measured, the involved project staff believes that all of the parents who persisted found the program to be beneficial and have progressed or grown in at least one or two of the areas outlined above.

B. SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

Christine Cavarretta, Family Literacy Instructor for her first year, brought a tremendous amount of experience and enthusiasm to the program. She selected many wonderful books and attempted to include a corresponding activity for each topic introduced.

The involved parents appeared to enjoy attending the program and participating in the lessons which are outlined below.

The books listed under the materials section of each class session were books which related to the class theme. In some cases these books were read by the students but not in all cases. The teacher introduced these stories to the class and usually read one or two of them aloud. The students were then given one of these books to practice reading, so that they could take it home to read to their children. In some cases, however, the selected books were too difficult for some of the lower level readers. These parents were given books which were more appropriate for their needs. Our goal was to enable all participating parents the opportunity to succeed. We believe that we accomplished this goal by individualizing the instruction and the materials.

Week 1 Family Traditions

Objectives:

Parents will become familiar with other parents in the class.
Parents will express their expectations in attending the Family Literacy Program.
Parents will become aware of the benefits of reading to their children.
Parents will become familiar with the term "tradition."

Procedures:

Parents will introduce themselves and briefly discuss their children (names, ages, school, etc.)
Parents will discuss their personal goal in attending Family Literacy. Parents will then write down at least one goal to review in the future.
The instructor will introduce six benefits of reading together.

a.* Reading together builds a lifelong bridge.
b. Reading and storytelling build word power.
c. Reading with a child is fun.
d. Reading aloud promotes good listening skills.
e. Reading stretches imaginations, introduces new ideas, and encourages independent thinking.
f. Reading at home gives your child an advantage in school.

The instructor will introduce the theme of Family Traditions. A discussion of traditions that parents remember from their childhood will follow.
The instructor will discuss the importance of making reading together a "Family Tradition."
The parents will choose a book to read for practice.

Materials:

When I Was Young in the Mountains - Cynthia Rylant
When I Am Old With You - Angela Johnson
Love You Forever - Robert Munsch
Brothers - Debbie Bailey
Just Me and My Cousin - Gina and Mercer Mayer
A Chair For My Mother - Vera B. Williams

Activity: Family Trees

Parents made leaf rubbings on paper then drew a tree trunk. Apples with parents, grandparents, and children's names were attached to the tree.

Teacher Observation:

Some of the parents already knew each other. It was a comfortable atmosphere. Parents understood the concept of traditions as related to holidays. After the discussion they were able to talk about other traditions in their families.
Some parents already have or are starting a tradition of reading together.
(Tradition - The handing down of information, beliefs or customs from one generation to another).
*Resource - Scholastic - Family Guide "Reading Together" Volume 1, Issue No. 1, November 1994

Week 2 American Indians

Objectives:

Parents will become more aware of reading opportunities throughout the day.
Parents will become acquainted with books that relate to Native American folklore and customs.
Parents will expand their reading skills by focusing on the prefix and suffix of words.

Procedures:

Class will discuss ways to provide additional reading experiences which are incorporated in daily activities for children.
The instructor will introduce the theme of American Indians through a short story about the American Heritage Day - November 25*
The class will discuss some of the traditions/discoveries we still share with Native Americans.
Parents will select a book to practice reading before sharing with their children.

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Materials:

Ten Little Rabbits - Grossman
The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses - Goble
Turquoise Boy - Terri Cohlene
Little Firefly - Terri Cohlene
Quillworker - Terri Cohlene
Coyote Dreams - Susan Nunes
The True Story of Pocahontas - Penner

Activity:

Parents learned how to make "Dream Catchers" and read about the legend/meaning.

Teacher Observation

One of the parents had a native American heritage and shared information about dream catchers and other customs. He shared a high interest in this topic.
Parents enjoyed learning about legends and making the "dream catchers."
Parents reported that they read with their child three to seven times over the previous week.
Resource - The Early Childhood Almanac

Week 3 Calendar

Objectives:

To familiarize parents with key concepts learned from a calendar.
To acquaint parents with books relating to calendar concepts and to upcoming events.
To familiarize parents with sources for community activities.

Procedures:

The instructor will review parents previous week reading experiences. The class will complete "Read Together Weekly Checklist" for Monday.
Parents will complete for the rest of the week at home.
The instructor will introduce theme calendars and discuss the purpose of using calendars as Educational Tools. Parents will assist in compiling a list of learning opportunities at different age levels.
Parents will examine a variety of calendars that list activities for parent/child at home and in the community.
Parents will select a book to practice reading to each other with staff supervision.
Parents will enter word lists to date, on computer.

Materials:

Chicken Sunday - Patricia Polacco
Cookie's Week - Cindy Ward
The Chanukkah Guest - Eric A. Kimmel
Imanis Gift at Kwanzaa - Denise Burden Patmon
Saint Nicholas - Ida Bohatta
Merry Christmas Mom and Dad - Mercer Mayer
The Night After Christmas - James Stevenson

Handouts:

Child Development Calendars
EC-Library - Fall and Winter Programming for branches
Erie Times - Showcase (Thursday)

Teacher Observation:

It was a small class. Parents presented a variety of interesting ideas for calendar use with children. Parents reported reading with their children between three and six days per week. Parents reported nightly reading with their children.

Activity:

Parents made a Santa calendar. Cotton balls were added to complete the beard on each day they read with their child.

Week 4 Cultural Awareness

Objectives:

Parents will become familiar with reading aloud techniques.
Parents will become aware of books pertaining to other cultures/countries.
Parents will improve reading skills and word recognition.

Procedure:

A discussion of practices to encourage during reading activities.

a. Read a book that is not beyond the child's ability to understand.
b. Use books as positive experiences, not as punishments.
c. Allow children to ask questions during reading sessions.
d. Always make time to read, if only for a few minutes.

Parents will take turns reading short readings about other countries, holidays, and traditions.
Parents will select a book and practice reading aloud.
Parents will practice word lists on computer.

Materials

It's a Small World - Walt Disney
Happy Christmas Gemma - Sarah Hayes
Imanis Gift at Kwanzaa - Denise Burden Patmon
Christmas Secrets - Ann Schweninger
Saint Nicholas - Ida Bohatta

Handout:

Color the Tree Ornaments - Daily reading reminder

Activity

I wonder what it would be like to live in ... (Parents completed the sentence and wrote a short paragraph).

Teacher Observation:

Very interesting class. Parents enjoyed learning about holiday traditions. Due to a smaller class, there was more individual computer time.
Parents were comfortable discussing the writing activity but were not enthusiastic about writing. Perhaps they were uncomfortable with it because of their difficulties with spelling.

Week 5 Amelia Bedelia

Objectives:

To help parents understand the importance of humor in children's lives.
To familiarize parents with a humerous series of children's books.
To familiarize parents with reading aloud strategies.
To improve parents' reading comprehension.

Procedures

Parents will share their experiences with humerous antics of their own children. What do they laugh at? They will show something funny that happened during the week. The class will discuss some differences in humor at various ages.
The instructor will introduce Amelia Bedelia and give some background information. Merry Christmas Amelia Bedelia by Peggy Parrish will be read.
Parents will discuss some of the antics of Amelia Bedelia explaining "why" they are funny (play on words).
Parents will choose a book to practice reading to a partner. Then each parent will present one or two humerous episodes in the story.
Discussion of reading strategies involved around the following:

a. Age appropriate reading materials.
b. High interest level books for both parent and child.
c. Importance of daily reading.
d. Use of expression.
e. Allowing child to handle book.
f. Holding child when reading or being close.

Materials:

Merry Christmas Amelia Bedelia - Peggy Parrish
Amelia Bedelia and the Baby - Peggy Parrish
Amelia Bedelia Goes Camping - Peggy Parrish
Amelia Bedelia Helps Out - Peggy Parrish
Good Work Amelia Bedelia - Peggy Parrish

Teacher Observation

Parents really enjoyed the humor of Amelia Bedelia. The discussion brought out the fact that because parents and children don't always share the same idea of humor, it can sometimes cause problems. Parents were going to try to see the child's view of humor more often at home this week.
Parents reported a good week of reading. Five out of seven parents said they read to their child between five and seven times during the last week.

Week 6 Game Day

Objectives:

To familiarize parents with the benefits of playing games with their children.
To improve parents comprehension and ability to follow directions.
To improve reading skills utilizing word decoding techniques.

Procedures:

The discussion will center around the kinds of games that parents and children played with at home and the types of skills which are learned through game playing.
The teacher will introduce games one at a time. The directions will be read as a group and the game will be assembled as needed.
The teacher will discuss different techniques for decoding unknown words.
Parents will play games to become familiar with the rules before playing with a child.

Materials:(games)

Guess Who
Boggle Jr.
Color Spin
Slide N Peek
Shape Beads

Activity:

Parents played games in small groups.

Teacher Observation:

Everyone had a great time learning the new games. They discovered the importance of re-reading material which they didn't understand, especially directions.
One student said that she felt bad because her child seems to know that she is a slow reader and glides over words she doesn't know.

Week 7 From a Child's Point of View

Objectives:

To become aware of books dealing with how children deal with difficult situations and their attitudes.
To familiarize parents with ideas for stretching their reading experiences through discussion with their children.

Procedures:

Parents will share reading experiences from last few weeks (holiday).
Parents will share and discuss episodes of difficulty they or their children had encountered in the last week. They will discuss how they felt and what they could do to help in difficult situations.
Parents will choose a book to practice reading.
Parents will present the main idea of a book from a child's point of view to the class.
The class will discuss ways to enrich reading experiences through the following:
a.Asking questions about the story.
b.Recalling events and details from the story.
c.Relating events from a story to a child's life.

Materials:

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day - Judith Viorst
When the New Baby Comes, I'm Moving Out - Alexander
Where the Wild Things Are - Maurice Sendak
The Pain and the Great One - Judy Blume

Activity:

Parents made up a story as a group. The instructor started with the first line, then pointed to a parent to continue. Each parent added a part then passed it to another.

Teacher Objectives:

The parents enjoyed the story about Alexander very much. They could relate to many of the situations. The parents shared some of their children's "bad days" and got ideas from others on how to help or avoid bad situations.
Parents reported decreased reading over the holidays due to the hustle and bustle. Many of the children got books for Christmas and were enthused!

Week 8 Winter Sports

Objectives:

To familiarize parents with books about winter sports and activities.
To familiarize parents with learning concepts and activities for winter.
To make parents more aware of the importance of punctuation in reading.

Procedures:

A discussion of winter activities in which parents and families currently engage will be held.
Instructor will suggest other fun activities for winter that encourage learning. Parents will review winter activities and science activity handouts.
Instructor will review purpose of punctuation with examples of how punctuation can change meaning in sentences.
Parents will practice reading sentences with punctuation in different positions.

Materials:

The Wild Toboggan Ride - Suzan Reid
Do Like Kyla - Angela Johnson
The Sled Surprise - Foster and Erickson
Trouble with Trolls - Jan Brett
Curious George Goes Sledding - H.A. Rey

Teacher Observation:

One parent has never made snow angels and hasn't been sledding with his kids. He said he is going to try it. Other parents were very interested in the other activities for winter and said they would really appreciate new ideas when the kids get antsy in the house.
Parents reported that their kids enjoyed reading time and especially liked new books.
Parents read between one and seven times per week. The average was three.

Handouts:

Winter activities
Bibliography of books
Science activities for winter

Week 9 The Newspaper

Objectives:

Parents will better understand some ways in which the newspaper can benefit them and their children.

Procedures:

Class will examine the sections of the newspaper reading the headings.
A discussion of what one can learn from a newspaper will be held.
The instructor and the parents will compile a list of uses for the newspaper at various age levels.
Parents will choose an article in the newspaper to read aloud and discuss with the group.

Materials:

Erie Daily Times Newspaper

Activity:

Each parent made a hat from the newspaper to take home. Instructions were included so that they could make them with their children.

Teacher Observation:

A good discussion on uses of the newspaper with preschoolers, elementary, middle, and high school students was held.
Some of the parents enjoyed reading the paper while others preferred the children's books.
The newspaper was too difficult for some.
The parents reported reading to their children zero to four times over the past week. They did say they "played" outside more.

Week 10 Good Health

Objectives:

Parents will become familiar with books pertaining to themes of childhood illnesses and good health practices.
Parents will become familiar with treatments of childhood illnesses.
Parents will improve their decoding skills.

Procedures:

Parents will have a discussion of good health practices including "How do you keep your kids healthy?"
Parents will share "home remedies."
Parents will select a book to practice reading in pairs. Ideas will be discussed for word decoding.
Students will summarize the books to the group.

Materials:

Germs Make Me Sick - Melvin Berger
So Sick! - H. Ziefert and C. Nicklaus
Who's Sick Today? - Lynne Cherry
Itchy, Itchy, Chicken Pox - Grace Maccarone
My Doctor - Harlow Rockwell
What's It Like to Be a Nurse? - Judith Bauer
Going to the Hospital - Fred Rogers

Activity:

Parents made a "Cover Your Cough" and "Wash Your Hands" project.
1. Traced and cut out a hand from paper
2. Drew a face on a paper plate
3. Glued tissue to the hand
4. Attached the hand to the face

Teacher Observation:

Parents were interested in this topic, especially because of the increased illnesses of the past months. They learned the difference between bacterial and viral infections and how they are treated.

Handout:

Common Childhood Illnesses

Week 11 Your Body and Exercise

Objectives:

Parents will become familiar with children's books that relate to the parts and the functioning of the human body.
Parents will become more aware of the effects of their children's activities on their bodies/health.

Procedures:

The class will discuss children's home activities after school and on weekends.
Parents will assist in compiling a list of activities for their children to promote exercise as an alternative to watching television, stressing "fun."
Parents will read the book, What Happens to a Hamburger as a group. Unfamiliar words will be discussed.
Parents will choose a book to read for practice.
Parents will practice their word lists on the computer.

Materials:

What Happens to a Hamburger - Paul Showers
The Skeleton Inside You - Phillip Balestrino
How Many Teeth - Paul Showers
Your Skin and Mine - Paul Showers
The Magic School Bus - Inside the Human Body - Joanna Cole

Activity:

Parents learned how to take their pulse rate after exercising to determine their fitness level.

Teacher Observation:

The parents found the topic to be interesting but difficult. The books had a lot of new words that were difficult to decode. Still the parents persevered and did finish their books. Many commented on the interesting things they had learned. We discussed the importance of re-reading materials that are difficult with a dictionary nearby.

Week 12 The Universe

Objectives:

Parents will better understand the world in which we live, enabling them to share information with their children.
Parents will improve their comprehension skills.

Procedures:

Discussion of the zodiac signs of parents using daily paper. Each parents' horoscope will be read.
Using constellation charts, parents will locate each zodiac star configuration and read the description.
Parents will read a short article about planets and stars. They will discuss for comprehension.
Parents will choose a book to practice reading.

Materials:

The Night Sky - Alice Perneck
The Big Dipper - Franklyn M. Branley
Voyager - John Gustafson
Shooting Stars - Franklyn M. Branley

Activity:

The parent made pictures of zodiac constellations on construction paper using foil-stick stars.

Teacher Observation:

Only one parent was able to attend due to sickness and cold weather.
The parent enjoyed the one-on-one attention while we worked on his reading fluency and comprehension.

Parent Observation

The parent reported that he did not read to his children this week, but did start reading a book himself.

Handout:

February reading charts

Week 13 Shel Silverstein

Objectives:

To familiarize parents with an author of popular children's stories and poetry.
To familiarize parents with a book that can be enjoyed on all levels.

Procedures:

The instructor will introduce the author, Shel Silverstein, by discussing his life achievements and familiarizing parents with some of his books.
Parents will practice the book, The Giving Tree, then the entire group will read it aloud together.
A discussion of why kids of various age levels would enjoy the book will be held.

Materials:

The Giving Tree - Shel Silverstein
Where the Sidewalk Ends - Shel Silverstein
The Missing Piece - Shel Silverstein
A Light in the Attic - Shel Silverstein

Activity:

After parents discussed different ways to show love, they each made a valentine for their spouse or their children.

Teacher Observation:

The parents really enjoyed the Silverstein books, especially the Giving Tree, and couldn't wait to get home to share it with their families.

Parent Observation:

One student said, "The more I read, the better I get," which led to a brief discussion about increasing reading opportunities in everyday activities. Parents reported reading to their kids three to six times during the past week.

Handout:

National Heart Month Handout

Week 14 Black History Month

Objectives:

To familiarize parents with books about African folktales and the many contributions to society made by black Americans.
To familiarize parents with the function of a bibliography.
To familiarize parents with the terms fiction and non-fiction.

Procedures:

The teacher will introduce theme by using a bibliography of literature related to black history. A discussion on what a bibliography is, where it can be found in books, and its uses will be held. After reading brief descriptions of books, parents will identify which books are fiction or non-fiction. Parents will read through Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears script before choosing the parts they would like to read. The parents will read the play together.
Parents will choose a book to read and practice.

Materials:

Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears - Verna Aardema
Follow the Dunking Gourd - Jeanette Winter
Mary McLeod Bethune - Meltzer
A Picture Story of Martin Luther King, Jr. - David A. Adler
Rosa Parks - Eloise Greenfield
Jesse Jackson - Patricia C. McKissock
Bo Jackson - Ellen Emerson White
I Wish I Had an Afro - John Shearer

Teacher Observation:

Parents were interested in the lives of black Americans. They enjoyed reading the play. In fact, they read it twice, showing improvements in expression when reading it the second time!

Parent Observation:

Parents reported reading to their kids between two to four times during the last week. Parents said they would try reading the play with their families.

Handouts:

February is Black History Month - Bibliography
Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears - Play
Snappin Puppet directions

Week 15 Children's Poetry

Objectives:

To familiarize parents with pertinent themes in children's poetry and how they relate personally.
To show how much fun and imagination is involved in writing poetry.

Procedures:

The theme will be introduced by examining a variety of books and the types of poetry presented. The class will discuss favorites of the parents. The parents will select a book to read and to practice. Each parent will read a poem to the class with a brief discussion of what it is about and how it might relate to them personally.

Materials

The Rooster Crows - Peter Sham
Blackberry Ink - Hans Wilhelm
One Sun - Terse Verse - McMillian
Sheriff of Rottenshot - Jack Pretlutsky
Hailstones and Halibut Bones - Mary O'Neill
Colors - Monique Felix

Activity:

After a discussion of what a "Haiku" poem is, and examples of some were read, the parents each composed their own "Haiku" poem.

Teacher Observation:

Parents enjoyed listening to the varieties of poetry being read. Most seemed to prefer reading Dr. Seuss style of phrase because it seemed easier. Some parents reported that they write their own poetry.
Parents were initially hesitant in writing their own Haiku.
After composing a poem as a group, each parent was able to write his own and share it with the group.

Parent Observation:

Parents requested that they felt that their reading has improved some. The parents said that they read six out of seven days in the past week.

Handout:

March reading chart (March included reading ... and collect your pot of gold).

Week 16 Telling Time

Objectives:

To improve parents' knowledge of time concepts.
To familiarize parents with children's books dealing with time concepts.
To familiarize parents with strategies for teaching their children time concepts.

Procedures:

As a group parents will take turns reading from The Time Book, discussing concepts as they appear.
How do parents make time relevant to their children? A discussion will be held.
Parents will choose books to practice reading.
Parents will practice word lists on computer individually.

Materials:

The Time Book - John Cassidy
Clocks and More Clocks - Pat Hutchins
Where Does the Sun Go At Night? - Mirra Ginsburg
The Grouchy Ladybug - Eric Carle
Wake Up Sun - David L. Harrison

Activity:

Using Adult Daily Living Skill pictures, parents illustrated a family/child daily schedule using clocks to show time of each activity, i.e., wake up, breakfast, school, day, dinner, homework, bath, read, bedtime.

Teacher Observation:

Good ideas from parents on making time relevant to their children. Parents had various levels of time-telling skills as demonstrated. They made Daily Schedule Charts and parents seemed to enjoy the activity. Some of their comments included:
"Maybe I don't always have to tell them what to do; they can use the chart."
A parent with babies and a toddler made a chart to show the kid's schedule for a babysitter.
"It's a good way to keep track of where my child is after school everyday, especially during sports seasons."

Handout:

The Time Book was the prize in our raffle for all parents present today!

Week 17 Aesop's Fables

Objectives:

To familiarize parents with a particular author.
To familiarize parents with the term, "fable."
To improve reading comprehension skills.

Procedures:

The teacher will introduce the theme by reading a brief summary of Aesop's life.
Discuss what the word fable means (A story in which animals speak and act like people, which is usually meant to teach a lesson).
Parents will choose a story to read to a partner for practice.
Each parent will present a summary of their fable to the group and will respond to questions.

Materials:

Over in a Wood - 10 Tales from Aesop - Eve Rice
The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse - Janet Stevens
The Hare and the Tortoise - Aesop
The Tortoise and the Hare - Janet Stevens
Town Mouse and Country Mouse - Eric Kincaid

Teacher Observation:

Parents enjoyed the fables. Comprehension was low, but improved with discussion.

Week 18 Sign Language

Objectives:

To familiarize parents with another form of communication.

Procedures:

The students will read a short history of the development of sign language. They will discuss for comprehension.
The instructor will demonstrate the manual alphabet and parents will imitate. When parents feel comfortable with the alphabet, each will sign his name to the group.
Parents will choose a book and practice reading and signing words in small groups.

Materials:

Handtalk - An ABC of Fingerspelling and Sign Language - Remy Charles, Marybeth and George Ancona.
Sign Language ABC with Linda Bove - Sesame Street
Word Signs - A First Book of Sign Language - Debby Slier

Activity:

Parents wrote a few sentences to complete the following: "If I could not speak, I would communicate my needs .....

Teacher Observation:

Two parents were familiar with sign language. The parents seemed to enjoy learning the manual alphabet and spelling simple words.

Parent Observation

Some of the parents commented that their children know some sign from Sesame Street and school!

Week 19 Mother Earth

Objectives:

To familiarize parents with a variety of species of plants and animals that are endangered or have become extinct.
To familiarize parents with the terms endangered, extinct, and recycle.

Procedures:

The teacher will introduce the theme by explaining the book, Endangered Species. The teacher will review the vocabulary introduced in the book and discuss the statistics and comparisons presented.
The teacher will discuss ways that people can actively help endangered species and other concerns of the earth (i.e., recycling, boycotting ...) How do you get your kids involved?

Materials:

The Rainforest - Cowcher
Protecting Endangered Species - Felicity Brooks
Turtles - Cousteau
And Then There Was One - Facklam

Teacher Observation:

Parents found the books informative and interesting. They talked about some of the recycling programs that they had been or are involved with now. One student shared her recycling experiences from other states.

Week 20 Dictionaries

Objective:

To familiarize parents with purpose and function of a dictionary.

Procedures:

Parents will select a dictionary and skim through the sections.
Instructor will review the information contained in the sections entitled, "How to Use the Dictionary, and The Parts of a Dictionary Entry."
Parents will practice finding the words on their word lists in the dictionary.

Materials:

Harcourt, Brace Junior Student Dictionary
American Heritage Student Dictionary
American Heritage First Dictionary
MacMillian Dictionary for Children/Revised Edition
Webster's New World Children's Dictionary

Activity:

Parents shared one or two particular things they found in their dictionary that they liked.
Game - The Dictionary Game - Players try to define unusual words.

Teacher Observation:

Parents were very enthusiastic about the dictionaries! It was a very enjoyable class. Many expressed regret that it is over for the year and hope to have the opportunity to participate in a similar program soon.